

Matt was running late for school as usual, so he grabbed a doughnut and quickly hugged Mom and Dad goodbye. On the way out the door, he patted the head of Lucky, his black cocker spaniel that Mom and Dad had given him when he was five years old.

When came home, he bounced up the front steps and inside the front door and from there began hopping to the kitchen. He poured a glass of milk and chose a banana for a snack while wondering where Mom was. She was usually home in the afternoon, and she had not left a note saying where she was. Matt also noticed that Lucky was not around either. Maybe Mom had taken her to the vet for a shot or something.

Then Matt heard Mom drive up in the driveway. "Hi, Mom. Where have you been, and have you seen Lucky?" asked Matt. Mom's face was pale and drawn as she said, "Matt, I have some bad news. A car hit Lucky today and she did not survive. The vet will bury her in the morning, and we can go visit her grave if you would like to."

Matt could not believe what Mom had just told him, and he ran to his room, slammed the door, fell onto his bed, and began to cry. He was so upset that poor Lucky had been hit by a car, and he hoped she had not suffered too much.

Much later he came out of his room and Mom welcomed him into her arms. She understood how Matt felt.

The next day Mom came home with a surprise for Matt in a large brown box. Matt peered inside and saw a small, furry ball with a little wagging tale. It was a mutt that Mom had gotten for him to take care of. Matt told Mom that he did not want another dog, especially a

mutt. Mom said she'd take the puppy back in the morning if Matt still thought he did not want a new dog.

That night as Matt lay in his bed, he heard the puppy whimpering. She was probably lonely and homesick, so Matt went down to the kitchen to get the puppy something to eat. All he could find was a gingerbread man cookie. The puppy loved the cookie and ate from Matt's hand.

Matt told Mom that he had decided to keep the puppy after all, and he wanted to call her Ginger because she liked to eat gingerbread man cookies.

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